



15th March 2017

Entertainment Licensing
Civic Hall
Leeds LS1 1UR

Dear Sir/Madam

Objection to:

Application No: SX/SEV/00012/17/01

Premises: Silks, 2 Sovereign Place, Leeds, LS1 4SP



Support After Rape & Sexual Violence Leeds (SARSVL) supports women and girls who have been affected by sexual violence at any time in their lives, promoting their needs and working towards the elimination of sexual violence.

SARSVL is an 'interested party' in the terms of the Licensing Act on two grounds:

1. Our helpline operates out of premises on Eastgate, so we are a business in the vicinity
and
2. We serve women and girls throughout Leeds, including those who live and are involved in businesses in the vicinity, with services available to women working in such establishments.

“Every woman in our society feels the fear of rape - no woman is allowed to ignore it.....The threat of violence is a total intrusion into women's personal space and transforms a routine and/or potential pleasurable activity (for example, a walk or journey).....into a potentially upsetting, disturbing and often threatening experience.”
Rape Crisis England & Wales

SARSVL believes that Leeds City Council (LCC) missed an opportunity when it introduced its policy to limit such clubs in the city centre to four. It should have adopted a Zero Tolerance of Sex Establishments policy but in the absence of this SARSVL does not believe that LCC should license these sex establishments as it is incompatible with the Equality Act 2010, Violence Against Women Strategy and Child Friendly Leeds policy.

The council itself has stated that “SEVs are not in accordance with a culturally rich and diverse city.”

The Equalities Act 2010 states that

“A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need toeliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act.”

Research has shown that wherever lap-dance and strip clubs appear, women’s quality of life deteriorates as a result, with increased reports of rape (Eden, 2003). These establishments licence the objectification of women so for LCC to licence them is against the duty they have to implement equalities legislation. Licensing such clubs suggests LCC condones the sexual objectification of women for money going on inside them. This actively damages women and girls living and working around lap-dancing clubs.

Such establishments contribute to the sexual objectification of women and raise concern about the welfare of women working in the clubs, the impact on the environment around the clubs; how women feel about walking around these areas and what happens to them when they do and to the general mainstreaming of the commercial sex industry.

While lap-dancing and the illusion of sexual availability become mainstreamed, rape conviction rates are falling, street harassment and casual attacks are rising and 26% of people believe that an inappropriately dressed woman is ‘asking for it’ (Amnesty/ICM, 2005). The numbers of reported rapes around lap dancing clubs is three times the national average (Eden, 2003).

This club is located in the centre of the city, close to amenities such as theatres and cinemas, routinely used by families and near shopping centres and on main thoroughfares. We believe this is a wholly inappropriate place for sex establishments. It undermines the city’s stated aim of being “fair, open and welcoming” (Vision for Leeds 2011-2030).

At SARSVL we deal with the reality of the effect the sexual objectification of women and increased harassment and attack of them around these premises. Women in public areas become unwilling symbols of the illusion of sexual availability and are often the physical recipients of male harassment or rape. In the meantime young boys growing up in the area are taught that this is an acceptable way to treat women, and young women learn that this is the way they will be treated.

Advertising for these establishments, including signage and frontages of premises and leaflet distribution in the area, create an intimidating atmosphere and a real threat to the safety of women.

Leeds is a city centre characterised by the close proximity of residential to commercial establishments; in fact it prides itself on this feature. For example, much student accommodation is located in the city centre. This increases the vulnerability of women walking around areas where a number of sex establishments are in operation.


Leeds is a diverse city with a variety of cultures and faiths, representing around 11% of the city. Women from a range of communities are intimidated by the proximity of such clubs and are less likely or willing to travel around the city at night when confronted by the operation of and advertising for sex establishments.

In conclusion, LCC should not licence this club for the reasons stated above.

Please let us know the result of this application.

In addition, we keep hearing – from adjacent premises – that Silks is intending to expand. Please keep us informed if any such application for expansion should arrive.

Yours faithfully,


for Support After Rape and Sexual Violence Leeds

We are here for you

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helpline text – 07797 803 211

Company Number
7202500, Registered
Charity Number 1139555
SARSVL is proud to be
a member of Rape Crisis
(England and Wales)